CHAPTER 11

COMPARATIVE EVALUATION AND THE AESTHETIC CONCEPT
Chapter 11
COMPARATIVE EVALUATION

It would be proper now, after the analytic study of both, the theory of Catharsis and the theory of Rasa, to attempt a comparative evaluation of them both, to find their essential points of similarities and to point out their marks of distinction.

The first point that we notice is the parallel between the two theories which are the outcome of the same nature of inquiry. It is very wonderful to find that two distinct nations and people, far from each other and very different in their culture and civilization raised a similar inquiry about the nature of a dramatic experience almost at the same time. We have seen that the concept of Rasa in its central core is as old as the time of Pāṇini or even older,\(^1\) So it takes both Aristotle's theory of Catharsis and Bharata's theory of Rasa on the same plane of time - about 4th Century B.C.

The theory of Catharsis is laid out in Aristotle's treatise, the 'Poetics' - now recognised as the lecture - notes of that great thinker and philosopher. Similarly the theory

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\(^1\) See Chap. 7, p.138 of this study.
of Rasa is an answer to the questions put by the disciples to the great Sage Bharata. The Sanskrit word 'Adhyāya' for a chapter means to study and the NS in which the theory of Rasa is propounded is the embodiment of this study.

The 'Poetics' and the NS, both these treatises are chiefly concerned with drama, its origin, its nature, its characteristic parts, its performance and its effects. The 'Poetics' with its twenty-six chapters (in Bywater's translation 73 pages in all), small in size, fragmentary but profound and pregnant with thought explains the concept of tragic drama and epic, from the historical evidence of Greek dramas and epic poetry before Aristotle. Bharata's Nātyāśāstra, on the other hand is a voluminous treatise, comprising six thousand couplets as also many passages in prose over 36 chapters. It treats exhaustively not only the theory of drama but also its production and presentation and hence dramatic technique and allied subjects - in short everything that concerns theatrical arts.

The core of the extant 'Poetics' lies in its theory of Catharsis which explains the 'final cause' - the function of tragedy. Similarly, the core of the NS lies in its theory of Rasa which describes the process and nature of dramatic experience in terms of Rasa. Both these theories emerge out of that basic inquiry; what happens when we witness (or read) a drama? They both are a sort of 'effective' criticism which
describe the effect of a dramatic performance of drama on spectators. Both theories have the spectator in the centre. They both describe what happens to him when he sees (or reads) a drama. Aristotle says that the spectator is purged of the disturbing elements of the feelings of pity and fear by their arousal in tragedy and gains the pleasure of relief. Bharata says that the spectator is full of joy when he contemplates or tastes or relishes the Bhūvas - mental states - emotions and feelings in their concretised form, presented with their Vibhāvas (determinants) and Anubhāvas (consequents).

2 K. Krishnamoorthy in his work, Essays in Sanskrit Criticism (Dharwar: Karnataka University, 1964, p.50) quotes a verse of Bhatta Tauta from Sridhara’s ‘Viveka’ a commentary on ‘Kavyaprakāsa’ (ed. Sivaprasad Bhattacharyya, Calcutta: Sanskrit College Research Series No. VII, 1959, p.9), which reminds one of the theory of Catharsis. The verse is as follows:

"Yathā darśānamalenaiva
malavopahanyate
tathā rāgāvabodhena pādayatām
śāhyate manah."

"Just as dust is used to clean up a rusty mirror, the mind of the critic is purified of passion through passion itself."

The idea has its close parallel to the homoeopathic explanation of Catharsis. Of Hilton, "As fire drives out fire, so pity pity". (p.8) of this study).
The theory of Catharsis is with reference to the tragic emotions of pity and fear. Aristotle has explained in the "Rhetoric" how both these emotions are painful and when excessive disturb the mental health. At the same time he is very much aware that periodic indulgence of these emotions is necessary for mental equilibrium or health. Tragedy provides us an outlet for these emotions and they are described as tragic emotions. Aristotle limits his concept of Catharsis to these tragic emotions of pity and fear. From the great Greek tragedies before him, he has surmised that these two feelings play a prominent role in tragedy and so he talks about these two tragic feelings.

When we come to the theory of Rasā, we find that its compass is wider and more comprehensive. It takes into account not only one or two emotions but the whole range of human-mind is covered by it. We have studied in detail the forty-nine Bhāvas-mental states described by Bharata. These mental states described by Bharata, these mental states cover almost every major or primary emotion or feeling of a human being. They enfold what the modern psychology calls the propensities or

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4 See Chap. eight of this study.
dispositions of a human mind. Rasa results when these mental states are presented into a concretised form with the help of their Vibhāvas and Anubhāvas, with the imaginative ability into a drama or poetry or a work of art in general. When these basic human emotions are evoked or aroused suggestively by the artistic presentation, Rasa springs forth with its blissful joy. Thus both the theories accept mental states - emotions and feelings - as the foundation or material for a dramatic or art experience. They both accord that the evocation or arousal of human feelings and emotions is the central theme of drama or of any art in general - whether they are the tragic emotions of pity and fear or the forty-nine mental states enumerated by Bharata. But the fundamental difference between the two views is this: For Aristotle it is the purgation or purification of those feelings which result into a pleasure of relief. While for Bharata, it is essentially the tasting, relishing or savouring of these emotions and feelings, and this tasting or relishing itself is joyful. In the theory of Catharsis the effect is pathological - getting rid of undesirable element of emotions while in the theory of Rasa it is tasteful experience - a sort of emotions and feelings in their unfettered form.

The next point of critical comparison, emerging from these two theories is of great philosophical import. For both
theories, as we have seen, the arousal of emotions and feelings is fundamental and of primary importance. Aristotle and Bharata explicitly say that the aim of drama is to arouse these emotions or Bhūvas. But Aristotle never clearly explains the nature of these feelings when they are aroused in tragedy or in art in general. He makes no clear distinction between the feelings that we experience in our everyday life and the feelings that we have when we see or read a drama. He accepts art as the imitation of the reality and so he judges art with the same criteria and standards as he would judge reality. He seems to believe that the feelings evoked by art, affect us exactly in the same manner as they would in real life, and hence his theory of Catharsis, which purges away the impure, disturbing excessive elements in these feelings or emotions. While Bharata and his commentators are very clear about the nature of feelings aroused or evoked by a drama or a work of art. They do not mix them up with the feelings experienced in every day life. In every day life we react and respond to feelings; in life we react according to our desire of having a thing or abandoning it but here in art we simply contemplate those feelings. It is only a cognition, a consciousness, awareness or perception of a feeling, delineated in drama or art in general. It is altogether different, of a different category from the feeling that we experience in our
everyday life. This is a different reality. Not the imitation or copy of the everyday ordinary reality but a unique reality, and so the nature of these feelings is also of a different world.

When Aristotle talks about Catharsis, we would naturally like to ask, Catharsis of whose feelings? and the natural answer would be the spectator's feelings. Of pity and fear. This answer would mean that for Aristotle there is no difference between the feelings evoked by art and the feelings experienced in the everyday ordinary world. But the theory of Rasa is very emphatic that the feelings evoked in drama and art in general are different from the feelings experienced in real life. It is true that we recognise these feelings in art on the similarity of their experience in ordinary life. But the chief mark of distinction lies in the fact that in ordinary life we react to do something as a result of some feelings. Our 'will' comes into operation, while in drama or art in general there is no reacting to emotions and feelings. It is simply a savitri - cognition or contemplation as such.

This fundamental difference between the nature of feelings assumed by both the theories put them on a different philosophical plane. We know that the Greeks judged everything with the metaphysical principle of reality and truth and so it was natural for Aristotle to give no separate category to the feelings evoked by tragedy or art in general.
The theory of Catharsis, laid out in the last clause of the definition of tragedy and the theory of Rasa, embodied in the Rasa-sūtra accept that a drama arouses or evokes emotions feelings and sentiments — mental states or Bhāvas. They only differ in name when they describe how and when these mental states are aroused. Both Aristotle and Bharata recognise the importance of plot in drama. Aristotle call it 'the end and purpose of tragedy' and Bharata describes it as 'the body of drama'. They both emphasize on the structure of drama as responsible for the arousal of feelings. Aristotle and Bharata, both have laid out a detailed theory of plot and character, which evoke these emotions at their highest or most effectively. Aristotle tells us that certain situations and characters arouse the emotions of pity and fear most effectively. The complex plot with its 'peripety' and 'recognition' and the characters who are 'like us' only evoke the emotions of pity and fear. His concept of 'Hamartia' — error or judgement or 'moral flaw', clearly tells us what type of character — a man of noble family, good, high in status but with some flaw will arouse the emotions of pity and fear most effectively.

5 Post., 6, 1450a 25.
6 NS, GOS, III,19,1. — 'Itivrtaṁ tu nātyaśya sarirāṁ'
Similarly the Rasa-sūtra, in nut-shell tells us what gives birth to Rasa— the relish or taste of emotions. Bharata also describes at length the plot, Iti-Vṛtta with its five stages (avasthā), the five arthapratīttis (Mīja, Bindu, Patāka, Prakārī, Kārya and the causes of fruit) and five Sandhiās— (Junctures or critical situations). He puts all these in a different formula, in the form of the Rasa-sūtra in the concept of the Vibhāvas and the Anubhāvas of mental states. The actual plot of a drama is made up of nothing but these Vibhāvas and Anubhāvas of the mental states. The Vibhāvas and Anubhāvas denote a sandhyāśa— a literary situation in the process of its execution on the stage. When the dramatist with his inventive imagination presents in a drama, the Vibhāvas—determinants and Anubhāvas— consequents of a mental state, weaving them together with the transitory feelings, the spectator tastes or relishes the mental state and experiences the blissful joy— Rasa. This concept of Vibhāvas and Anubhāvas establishes the most direct and intimate contact between 'iti-vṛtta' plot and Rasa. 7 Thus both the theories accept the interdependence of the plot with the arousal of a mental state.

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7 For the intimate connection of Rasa with the construction of plot worked out in detail see Christopher Byrski, Concept of Ancient Indian Theatre (New Delhi: M.M. Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 1974), pp. 101-43.
Aristotle and Bharata, both agree about the sources of plot - history, tradition or the poet's own inventive imagination. Bharata says that the subject matter of Nātaka is a well-known story. Both stress the inventive powers of the poet and recognize the importance of probability.

The next point of similarity is that both these theories, the theory of Catharsis and the theory of Rasa are an attempt to understand the process and the nature of dramatic experience. The theory of Catharsis explains the dramatic experience in terms of pathology. It says while reading or witnessing a tragedy we experience the feelings of pity and fear. These feelings in excess are not good for mental health. While arousing these feelings tragedy also purges us of these feelings. It relieves us of impure element and there is a relief accompanied with pleasure. This pleasure is the outcome of the relief of purgation. As Prof. Lucas⁹ points out this pleasure seems to be the end-result of the dramatic experience. It means as if we go to theatre to cure ourselves, for a homoeopathic treatment, and when we return home, we get relief and hence

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⁶ NS, 603, III, 20, v.10
"Prakṣhyāta Vastuvīsayaḥ".

pleasure. It, as if points out that the dramatic experience, and the pleasure we got, is not a simultaneous process but the pleasure is the end-result of the dramatic experience. Thus the theory of Catharsis gives an ulterior motive, a practical purpose to the dramatic experience in which the beautiful is identified with the good and ultimately with the useful. The theory of Rasa, however, describes the dramatic experience as a dynamic process of which pleasure is an essential factor. According to Bharata's theory of Rasa, the spectator's experience is essentially that of tasting or relishing of emotions delineated in art, and it is always an experience of blissful joy. As we have noted before, all the later commentators of Bharata agree about the joyful nature of Rasa-experience. Bhatta Nâyaka was the first to compare the joy of Rasa—experience with the joy of the realisation of Brahman the supreme bliss. AS has elaborated and explained this basic concept of Rasa as 'Nirvighnā Sātviti.' He has explained in detail how and why this experience eliminates time, space and particularity of a mental state. The spectator also comes out of his personal ego, he becomes 'depersonalised' and with sympathetic induction, by the generalisation, contemplates the emotions depicted or concretised by Vibhūvas and Anubhūvas. At the time of the dramatic experience, he drops all limits of time and space, forgets his own limited self, and becomes one with the emotions
portrayed and relishes than without any outside practical purpose or motive. Thus this tasting or relishing or savouring is Rasa, a dynamic process, existing only when there is the confrontation or contact with the Vibhāvas. etc. We must note this with utmost care that the Rasa - experience is not the end-result but a process, a carṇya - chewing of the dramatic material presented before the spectator. This Rasa-experience lasts only till then, when one is witnessing (or reading) a drama. Its life and reality depends on the continuity of that contact with an art-product, the *stimulant situation*. As soon as that is removed, Rasa disappears. Rasa cannot exist without the *ception of Vibhāvas and Anubhāvas. Thus we find that Rasa is not 'produced' like an end or is not the resultant effect as 'Catharsis' seems to be but it is the dynamic process itself of cognising and contemplating emotions, without any ulterior motive and which is always joyful by its unique nature.

The next point of affinity between the two theories is the fact that both the theories accept that in the dramatic experience, even the painful is transformed into positive, pleasure giving experience, though they give different reasons for it. Aristotle explains this phenomenon in terms of 'imitation' and Catharsis. Aristotle points out that by our very nature we take delight in works of imitation. The pleasure is derived from the tragic emotions of pity and fear.
by the means of imitation. But he put more emphasis on the fact of Catharsis—how it purges the painful into the pleasant. The theory of Catharsis makes it clear that the painful in reality gets purged in the dramatic experience and the relief that is produced is pleasurable. So even the painful tragedy gives us pleasure.

The theory of Rasa explains this phenomenon with more philosophical significance. The reader or the spectator relishes the dramatic experience because it is entirely different from the real experience which gives pain and pleasure. Here it is simply a 'willless contemplation' or a cognition or a consciousness of a particular Bhāva. It does not trigger any actor action or practical involvement in the stream of represented action. There is no practical activation in the dramatic experience. By the power of generalization, the spectator cognizes the emotions not as 'my, your or his' but emotions as such and in themselves. The object is stripped off whatever is individual and local, it becomes a type that holds good at all times and in all places, an abstract reality that can be contemplated without any relevance to utility. Owing to the fact that the dramatic experience is gained through imaginative relishing and not through practical exploitation Rasa experience is always joyful.

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10 Post, 4, 1453b, 10.
It has no end external to it and so no pain. The pleasure results not from any practical considerations but from a state of being - from the cognition or contemplation of mental states.

Both these theories accept the fact of the universalisation of mental states in the dramatic experience. Aristotle has answered Plato that art is not a slavish imitation of reality; twice removed from the truth. Presenting as art must do, individual men and women in the circumstances of life, it does not stop there, but penetrates to what is significant in action and character, expressing through their words and actions what is true for all human nature, the poet's truth, the universal. If the poet must necessarily give us something less than physical reality, he makes rich compensation by giving something more, the universal reality. "Poetry" says, 'Aristotle' is more philosophical than history.' This contribution of Aristotle gives him a permanent place in the ranks of art-critics. This basic understanding of art still makes us read Aristotle's 'Poetics'.

The theory of Rosa also explains this power of generalisation in a different way. It is this generalisation which enables the Vihāras, etc. to be sensed in their generalised character, which rises above their specific contextual reference. We have seen\(^1\) that AS has worked out

\(^1\) See Ch. 19, p.289 of this study.
this in detail – how Rama's love for Sīta is a particular which becomes the universal for love in general without the limitation of the reference to the agent (spectator) or the object. When the emotion is activated by a non-practical context in drama, the experience is a generalised one. The configuration of Vībhāva, etc., is enough to account for the universalization of experience and its relishing.

The theory of Catharsis and the theory of Rasa, both describe the dramatic experience in terms of pleasure. Both say that the dramatic experience is full of pleasure or joy, though they give different causes for this pleasure which inevitably accompanies the dramatic experience. Aristotle seems to say that the pleasure arises because the emotions are purged of the painful element and the relief is always pleasant. While Bharata says that the dramatic experience is full of joy because it is the tasting or relishing of emotions, concretised by the union of Vībhāvas, anubhāves and Vyāhīcāriyābhāves. We must notice that not only the causes are different but even the nature of pleasure is different. Unfortunately we have to use only one word pleasure for two different types of experiences. The effect of catharsis – purgation or purification, the relief is called full of pleasure and the pure, unalloyed joy of the contemplation or relish of mental states – emotions, sentiments and feelings – is also called pleasure. These two are altogether different.
types of pleasure, accompanying two experiences of different categories. The pleasure described by Aristotle is not what Kant calls disinterested pleasure, while the pleasure described by Rasa is unalloyed pure pleasure. And Aristotle stopped with the pleasure that he ascribes to instinct of imitation and a natural liking for melody and rhythm and the pleasure that we take in learning he would have been nearer or similar to the pleasure described by Rasa-experience. But the ethical and ameliorative preoccupations of Aristotle lead him to the pleasure of relief produced by Catharsis—purification or purification of emotions. While in case of the theory of Rasa, it is a sort of ecstasy, the highest bliss or joy 'Anand' which is akin to the joy of the realisation of Brahman.
Now let us take up the last point of our comparative evaluation of both these theories - the theory of Rasa and the theory of Catharsis. How far each one of them is - what is called in modern times - aesthetic? Which theory is nearer or similar to the modern concept of aesthetic or has aesthetic value? For such an evaluation it is necessary first to have an idea of what is aesthetic.

Aesthetic as it is understood, today, chiefly means the beautiful in fine-arts, beauty being a value which underlies normative standards, and 'the Aesthetics' is the theoretical study of fine arts or is the philosophy of the beautiful, where we have the conceptual knowledge of the beautiful. The subject matter of Aesthetics is "the sort of responses and experience that works of art were created to produce, to which may be added natural objects and any other things that can evoke the same sort of experience. The central material here is the aesthetic experience."\(^\text{12}\)

The emergence of Aesthetics as the philosophy of the beautiful was as late as the 18th Cent. Till then the

beautiful was of interest to Metaphysics, as the tangible meeting point of reason and feeling and as the imitation of the nature or reality. It was not regarded as a special science but came under the philosophy of the knowledge.

The name Aesthetics first appeared in 'Reflections on Poetry' (1735) by Alexander Baumgarten a follower of the Rationalistic School of Philosophy under the influence of Descartes and Leibniz. These philosophers had distinguished between 'clear and distinct' ideas of cognition and 'confused' cognition. They meant by clear and distinct ideas, systematic thought as developed in Logic and Mathematics. This distinction restricted cognition to conceptual knowledge.

Baumgarten noticed, however, that sensory and perceptual cognition was thereby excluded. Sensations and perceptions were regarded as intrinsically confused. Baumgarten realised that this was a different type of cognition, (though of a lower order than clear and distinct logical cognition), recognised clearly by the imagination. This perceptual cognition is what Baumgarten found in poetry. Drawing upon the Greek word for perception (aisthesis), Baumgarten coined the word aesthetics for the science of perceptual cognition - i.e. of perception as clear but confused knowledge - that is knowledge in the form of feeling and remaining in that form. He says,
"The Greek Philosophers and the Fathers of the Church already sufficiently distinguished *aistheta* from *noëta* (objects of thought). But obviously for them aistheta were not to be identified with things perceptible by the senses, for objects not actually present, namely imaginations, were so called. Noëta, as what can be known by the higher faculty of knowledge, are the object of Logic; aistheta belong to the aesthetical science or to aesthetic."13

"The basic conclusion of B's analysis can be stated in these terms: the aesthetic value, the beauty of a poem is proportional to the extent of clear as compared with confused, ideas that it contains; or - paraphrased in the terms of contemporary theory - the aesthetic value of a work of art is proportional to the intuited vividness of the fused quality of the experience that it evokes."14

Baumgarten's work is important in the history of aesthetics because it marks the beginning of Aesthetics as a special field of investigation. Later on various conceptions of aesthetic value or aesthetic experience are

14 En.Bri. I, p.150.
forwarded and developed by many philosophical theories each holding a certain feature as dominant and emphasizing it. But there is a fair amount of agreement as to the core of the field. They all identify the aesthetic experience with some distinctive sort of pleasure. Pleasure is equated with positive value and pain or unpleasantness with negative value. "Aesthetic value is distinguished from other values, such as the ethical, by one or more special traits. In the broadest sense aesthetic value is taken as intrinsic pleasure or the liking of a thing for itself, as against liking it as a means to an end. Aesthetic values are immediate (direct) as opposed to mediate or practical values."15

This concept of the core of the Aesthetics was clearly and firmly established by Kant the great German philosopher in his book, 'Critique of Judgment', (1790), where he held that aesthetic value exhibits itself in a sort of pleasure. For Kant this was a very special sort of pleasure. In order to attain to beauty, the pleasure must be (1) disinterested, (2) universal (3) necessary in a uniquely special way and (4) must give the effect of purposiveness. Without actually being the satisfaction of a purpose.

The 'disinterested' pleasure means that it has to be an immediate pleasure found in the object, not the practical

15 Ibid., p.191.
Hieing of a thing as a means to an end. "This feeling of pleasure is the predicate in the aesthetic judgment and being pleasure in the presentation of an object by reason of its form only, is universal though subjective. When the predicate is not a feeling of pleasure but a relation to the idea of an end, then we have the teleological and not the aesthetic judgment". 16

Kant recognised that most pleasures are clearly subjective and do not yield to moulding by the concepts of the understanding. Accordingly, the universality of aesthetic pleasure could not be accounted for by the categories of the understanding. His solution was that it is due to representations or impressions that set up a harmonious interplay between two whole faculties of the mind. Aesthetic pleasure arises when the faculty of imagination comes into harmony with that of understanding. "He (Kant) means that a conformity is brought to light between the perception of the object and the faculties of the subject, such that the subject is harmoniously affected in respect of the relation between fancy and understanding. We must assume this to mean that the image presented to fancy or pictorial perception in some way

meets the needs or accommodates itself to the rules of the understanding."¹⁷ Thus aesthetic pleasure combines the characteristics of desire and knowledge and the aesthetic judgment is the meeting point of understanding and Reason the conscious and the intelligible.

Kant was convinced that since these faculties are common to all minds, being the very structure of mind, the aesthetic judgment of the universality of aesthetic pleasure is automatically justified. For the same reason it is seen to be necessary.

Kant said that the beautiful is the 'form of purposiveness without a purpose'. It is disinterested – that is without purpose because practical purposive interests have to do solely with concepts of ends, which belong only to the understanding. And it is not a satisfaction in the achievement of a purpose because purposes are based on concepts. It contains a sort of purposiveness however, because the manifold of material gathered up by the Faculty of Imagination is brought to conform harmoniously with the understanding as the Faculty of concepts.

Thus Kant shows that the causal order of the day-to-day world is replaced in art by the order of Freedom. Egoentrie, utilitarian purposes are shed in the aesthetic

¹⁷ Ibid., p.263.
confrontation, but a higher purpose does rule the context, the desire to relish feeling rather than merely to feel. The laws that govern the normal relation between stimuli and responses to them, painful or pleasant, are replaced by the law of aesthetic transformation by which pain also is transmuted into joy. In the aesthetic context, the object is represented as free from all utilitarian relations itself. The subject is also free from his personal everyday life. All his categorical relations to his environment are broken off. Aesthetic experience which releases the object into its 'free' being is the work of the free play of the imagination. Subject and object become 'free' in a new sense. From this radical change in the attitude towards beings, results a new quality of pleasure, generated by the form in which the object now reveals itself. Its 'pure form' suggests 'unity of the manifold' the pure manifestation of its existence. This, asserts Kant, is the manifestation of beauty. The distinction of aesthetic pleasure as superior to all of the common pleasures of mere sensuous enjoyment, carnal indulgence, and entertainment is thus established by its universality, necessity, disinterestedness, and purposiveness without explicit purpose.

Thus Kant made a drastic distinction between the activities of the sciences and those of the arts, which prepared the way for the distinction between facts and values
and raised the possibility of two kinds of cognitions - scientific, conceptual cognition and the insight of the genius into deeper values. "The objective and purpose of aesthetic is the perfection of sensitive cognition. This perfection is beauty." 18

Prof. Windelband puts this concept of 'aesthetic judgment' very aptly when he says,

"For the aesthetic judgment, the empirical reality of its object is a matter of complete indifference. The hedonic feelings all presuppose the material presence of the phenomena which excite them; ethical approval or disapproval concerns just the realization of the moral end in willing and acting; the aesthetic feelings, on the contrary require as their condition a pure delight in the mere represented image of the object, whether the same is objectively present for knowledge or not. The aesthetic life lacks the power of the feelings of personal well and just as it lacks the earnestness of a universally worthy work for ethical ends, it is the mere play of ideas in imagination." 19

Edward Bullough (1880-1934) like Kant stressed the importance of distinterestedness in the appreciation of a work of art. He describes 'Psychical distance' as an aesthetic principle. He describes it as, "Distance is produced


in the first instance by putting the phenomenon, so to speak, out of gear with our practical actual self; by allowing it to stand outside the context of our personal needs and ends—
in short by looking at it 'objectively', as it has often been called by permitting only such reactions on our part as emphasise the 'objective' features of the experience and by interpreting even our subjective affections not as modes of our being but rather as characteristics of the phenomenon.\(^{20}\) He says that such distance makes the aesthetic contemplation possible—"Distance, as I said before, is obtained by separating the object and its appeal from one's own self, by putting it out of gear with practical needs and ends. Thereby the 'contemplation' of the object becomes alone possible."\(^{21}\)

This 'disinterestedness', this freedom from the domination of utilitarian motivation was further explained by another German philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer (1798-1860) in his philosophy. For him also 'causality was the only category of importance', and "characterised the aesthetic life as observation free from causality, and found the difference between art and science in the fact that science was observation from the point of view of causality. Self-sufficiency is the essential feature of the beautiful."\(^{22}\)


\(^{21}\) Ibid., p.97.

Schopenhauer outlined a metaphysical system which saw life condemned to the continuous tension of striving, willing. His metaphysics of the will culminated in his doctrine of the misery of existence. The very nature of the will, he said, involved a preponderance of pain; since in very effort there is the pain of the unsatisfied will. We can achieve freedom of the valuation from wish and will only in the aesthetic experience. "In his philosophy, there is no God and will is evil and can be overcome only by a revolt, a reversal of the will, its negation through complete identification with others in pity and asceticism." We can achieve freedom of the valuation from wish and will also in the aesthetic experience. Art is another way of negating the will. "The beauty of the beautiful frees us from the will - from the whole apparatus that attends our greatest vice and misfortune, the will to live - from explanation, causation, means and ends, purpose, desire; and on the other hand it fills our mind with an idea, an objectification of the will at a certain grade which we see in, and as the essence of, the merely particular object presented to our aesthetic perception." The aesthetic contemplation - the willless stirrings of soul gives us a means of escaping the treadmill of the will. He writes, "It is the painless

23 Krishn Chaitanya, p. 211.
24 Bosanquet, p. 365.
state Epicurus prized as the highest good and the state of the gods; For we are For the moment set free from the miserable striving of the will; we keep the sabbath of the penal servitude of living; the wheel of Irion stands still."^25
Thus Schopenhauer found happiness in the aesthetic contemplation in the overcoming of the unhappy will to live, in the activity of the pure will-less subject of knowledge.
Schopenhauer has thus defined aesthetic experience as 'will-less contemplation' and his name with that of Plotinus is associated with the mystic theory of aesthetics.

According to this theory, "the aesthetic experience consists in the disinterested contemplation of the platonic forms in their calm detachment from particulars that are caught in the flux and turmoil of the world of appearance. The only mystic motive is that those forms may act as symbols or rungs on the mystic ladder leading to communion with the unity and peace of ultimate being."^26 For them the beauty is found in the symbols of mystic peace and unity to be felt, in nature and in works of art. The mystic theory explains the aesthetic experience as a kind of emotive experience in which the criterion for the supreme experience is that of the mystic

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experience itself in complete ecstasy. Yet all mystics agree that the supremo experience itself is not an aesthetic experience. "The experience of beauty in communion with nature and through the arts are thought to be clearly distinguishable from the ultimate ecstasy that, when attained, absorbs all of these lesser experiences into its ineffable unity." Thus into the realm of metaphysical the decisive mark of the beautiful is in a vision of the essence of things. Freedom is in Kantian sense the suprasensible in the sensible. As Plotinus indicated, 'the beautiful is the sensible appearance of the idea.'

This translucence of the suprasensible in the sensible object enriched by Kant was also strongly held by the German idealists such as Schelling, Hegel, Selger, Weisso, Vischer, etc. We find this metaphysical aesthetics in its most characteristic form in Schelling, for whom art thus becomes the organon of philosophy. Science, he shows, in its ceaseless progress seeks the idea in the appearance without ever attaining to it; the moral life in its similar ceaseless advance forms the idea in the appearance without ever bringing it to full realisation. "It is only in the vision of the beautiful that the idea is entirely present in its sensory

27 Ibid., p.137.
appearance. Here the infinite has passed wholly into the finite, and the finite is wholly filled with the infinite. Thus every work of art exhibits what is otherwise given only in the totality of the real: namely, the realization of the infinite idea in finite appearance. Hence for schelling the universe is God's work of art, the incorporation of his idea in the sensory appearance; and beauty in nature is the art fashioned by God. Hegel means the same when he describes the 'absolute mind' and the 'particular mind'.

The beautiful as the vision of the essence of things was further made explicit by the Italian Idealist Philosopher Croce in his work 'Aesthetics'. He begins his aesthetic theory by describing two types of knowledge — "knowledge has two forms: it is either intuitive knowledge or logical knowledge; knowledge obtained through the imagination or knowledge obtained through the intellect." Croce names art as the intuitive knowledge and the aesthetic value for him is the intuition of quality. He established the autonomy

28 Compare Rāyāna — "Paśyam ēvavasya kāvyam ma māmār na jiryaṁ" Look at God's poetry. It does not die and does not grow old.

29 Wilhelm, Introduction to Philosophy, p.315.

of aesthetic experience by calling art a vision or intuition. "If art is intuition, and if intuition means 'theory' in the original sense of contemplation, then art cannot be a utilitarian activity. And since a utilitarian activity is one which aims at securing a pleasure or removing a pain, art in its essence can have nothing to do with utility, pleasure or pain as such."31

Croce also makes it clear that art being intuition is quite distinct from the moral activity. He writes, "By the latter we mean that type of practical activity, which though necessarily concerned with what is useful, and with pleasure and pain, is not itself simply utilitarian or hedonistic, but occurs on a higher mental level. But intuition, being contemplative is opposed to any practical activity. Art in fact, as was long ago observed, is not produced by an act of will; the good will which makes a good man does not make an artist. And since it is not produced by an act of will, art is exempt from moral distinctions, not by any privilege of immunity, but because moral distinctions simply do not apply."32

Croce makes an unusual identification of intuition with expression. He says,

31 Carritt, p.234.
32 Ibid., pp.235-36.
"Every true intuition or representation is also expression. That which does not objectify itself in expression is not intuition or representation but sensation and mere natural fact. The spirit only intuites in making, forming, expression. He who separates intuition from expression never succeeds in reuniting them."  

Here, Croce believes that the intuition of the quality of the aesthetic object comes to light only in the process of giving it expression. According to him, "Intuition is distinguished as form, from what is felt and suffered from the flux or wave of sensation, or from psychic matter, and this form, this taking possession is expression."  

Croce goes on to draw many conclusions from this identification of intuition and expression the chief being the rejection of all concepts from aesthetic intuition. The intuition of immediate qualitative expression produces art. It is the quality of the whole event or object that is grasped, the total intuitive quality which gets expressed as an artifact. What is beautiful here is the whole and not the heap of its details. "This means that in the aesthetic intuition the qualities of the details are fused into the quality of the whole. The fused quality, moreover is different from any of the details even when the perceiver is taking up their qualities into the whole."  

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33 Croce, Aesthetics, p.3  
34 Ibid., p.11.  
Croce's identification of intuition and expression led to another theory of Expression. The central doctrine of this theory of Expression in art is that a work of art is an expression of the artist's emotions. The power of artists to arouse and communicate emotions and to embody them in works of art was even noticed by Plato and Aristotle and since then it is held as the basic fact of art. Leo Tolstoy in his book, 'What is Art? (1896) laid out from this observation, a new aesthetic theory which elevated men with a deep moral and religious emotion free from worldly triviality and carnal dissipation. He writes:

"To evoke in oneself a feeling one has once experienced, and having evoked it in oneself, then, by means of movements, lines, colours, sounds, or forms expressed in words, as to transmit that feeling to others may experience the same feeling – this is the activity of art......

It is a means of union among men, joining them together in the same feelings, and indispensable for the life and progress towards well-being of individuals and of humanity."36

The modern communication theories of the nineteenth century also formulate the view that "The artist embodies or symbolizes in the art work an emotion or feeling in such a way that the observer savours and enjoys it without experiencing it

in the full sense. The appreciation of the work of art was regarded rather as a mode of emotional cognition, bringing concrete awareness of the embodied feeling, than as simple affective response. "

The formulation of the theory that a work of art is an expression or embodiment of emotion, was influenced by T.S. Eliot's notion of an 'objective correlate' of emotions. In his essay 'Hamlet and his Problems' (1919), Eliot said: "The only way of expressing an emotion in the form of art is by finding an "objective correlative"; in other words, a set of objects, a situation, a chain of events which shall be the formula of that particular emotion; such that when the external facts, which must terminate in sensory experience, are given, the emotion is immediately evoked."

An interesting reformulation of the theory was offered by Huw Morris Jones (The Language of Feelings, The British Journal of Aesthetics, 1962), who argued that the several arts are languages whereby "the artist explores and exploits the changing ways of feeling and gives them a habitation and a name."  

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Through being embodied in the art work, feelings become depersonalised, as statements of belief are depersonalised when they receive logical formulation but in appreciation they are savoured and enjoyed concretely.

A special form of the theory has been put forward also by Susanne Langer. She defines art as "Art is the creation of forms symbolic of human feelings." She makes it clear, what she means by 'creation' by saying, "A work of art on the other hand, is more than an arrangement" of given things - even qualitative things. Something emerges from the arrangement of tones or colours, which was not there before, and this, rather than the arranged material is the symbol of sentience. According to Susanna Langer, works of art are symbols or 'iconic signs' of emotions. They do not directly express the artist's experienced emotions but rather his apprehension of the nature of emotions. For her, "A work of art is a symbol which does not symbolise anything other than itself, but which reproduces in its own structural form the structure or pattern of feeling and emotion."

41 Ibid., p.40.
42 Harold Osborne, p.13.
John Dewey in his work 'Art as Experience' (1934) describes the aesthetic quality as "That which rounds out an experience into completeness and unity as emotional." John Dewey thinks that 'artistic' and 'aesthetic' refer to two different processes and we have no single word which covers both. He says, "Since 'artistic' refers primarily, to the act of production and 'esthetic' to that of perception and enjoyment, the absence of a term designating the two processes taken together is unfortunate." But he accepts the concept of enjoyment as the fundamental for aesthetic when he says,

"The word 'esthetic' refers, as we have already noted, to experience as appreciative, perceiving, and enjoying. It denotes the consumer's rather than the producer's standpoint. It is Gusto, taste; and, as with cooking, overt skillful action is on the side of the cook who prepares while taste is on the side of the consumer."45

From the above historical and philosophical review of some major aesthetic theories or concepts, it is proper to arrive at a definition of aesthetic value. A definition of value can act as a standard of value for the field of values.

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44 Ibid., p.361.

that it defines. A definition acts as a standard of aesthetic value in two ways; first, it demarcates what are or are not objects of aesthetic value; and second it determines the amount of aesthetic value that these objects have whenever the defining terms admit of quantitative differences. For instance for the common hedonistic view that defines aesthetic value as 'experiences giving immediate pleasure', or as 'the liking of things in themselves', it would appear to follow that things liked as means to other things are not aesthetic values.

From the above review of some major aesthetic concepts we can enumerate some characteristics of aesthetic experience or enjoyment.

The first and foremost characteristic that we notice is that the aesthetic experience gives immediate pleasure, or pleasure in itself. The art-experience inevitably gives pleasure, in spite of its subject matter or content. The pleasure arises from the vision of the essence of the things or from the idea revealed in the object or from the manifestation of infinite in the finite or from the 'suprasensuous embodied in the sensuous'.

This pleasure as Kant said is 'disinterested'. It has no other ulterior motive. It is not governed by practical considerations but it is 'will-less contemplation. Here
the end of the aesthetic activity is not external and other than the activity. "The end is internal and real in the sense that it is not secondary or trumped up as in autotelic activity, internal in the sense that it is not determined by practical considerations but is really a state of being." The aesthetic experience is free from the categories of the reality. Here the object and the subject both are free. Object is free from all utilitarian relations and motives and the subject is free from the normal relation between stimuli and responses. The object in art is a 'virtual' object and not a physical object. The subject is contemplating and there are no 'strivings of will'. There is "psychical distance" between the spectator and the work of art. In short the aesthetic experience consists in the disinterested contemplation of the 'idea' or universal 'Form' revealed in the particular. Self-sufficiency is the essential feature of the aesthetic - beautiful. Whenever the sensuous shape presents itself to us as so complete and self-contained that it seems to need nothing further for its reality. So it is with the aesthetic object, it is determined in itself, and it looks as if all its categorical relations to its environment were broken off.

The aesthetic value of the art-experience is

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46 Krishna Chaitanya, p.29.
essentially cognitive. It is the cognition of the emotive content. There is no willing - no striving - no active reactions and responses but it is mere contemplation - the will-less contemplation. It is not the logical conceptual knowledge but the intuitive imaginative grasping of the comprehensive whole. In the aesthetic experience we simply cognize and contemplate 'feelings concretised in a work of art' and not experience or feel them as in real life. In this relishing of experience, even the painful is transformed because the attitude is detached - aesthetic.

The aesthetic value has a universal value. Art expresses the universal. It presents not the particular but the universal. The configuration of the aesthetic situation, free from any personal, practical context, evokes a generalised emotive experience. The artist might imitate the universal form or essence in which particular objects share rather than the physical particular. By this means art acquired a universal cognitive role resembling philosophy rather than history. The artist represents the form, not the particulars, he seeks, to look through the particular to the form. He does not stop at the momentary appearance but seeks out the essential form. Plato made the mistake of conceiving the artist as imitating the appearance of a particular. Aristotle corrected this by conceiving the artist as imitating the universal form as seen through the
The last characteristic of aesthetic experience that we have noticed is that art is an expression or embodiment of emotions. A work of art arouses or evokes the emotions in a competent spectator or reader. It is an 'objective correlative'. A work of art is successful to that extent in which it is able to arouse the emotions concretised or embodied in it. Art essentially concerns itself with human emotions and feelings and the aesthetic experience or enjoyment means the relishing or evoking of these fundamental human emotions.

With this understanding of the aesthetic concept let us now examine the theory of Catharsis and the theory of Rasa and see which theory reveals its affinity with world currents in aesthetic thought.

The Theory of Catharsis and the Aesthetic Concept

The theory of Catharsis describes the effect of a tragedy on the spectator. Tragedy, says Aristotle excites or arouses the emotions of pity and fear-kindred emotions that are in the breast of all men – and by the act of excitation affords a pleasurable relief. The emotions of pity and fear, which are painful by nature get purged by the tragic excitement of those emotions and as the relief is wanted there is always
a harmless pleasure attending the process of relief. The tragic experience serves as a sort of medicine, producing Catharsis to lighten and relieve the soul of the accumulated emotions. This makes Catharsis the end-result. Thus the ultimate end — the 'final cause' in terms of Aristotelian terminology of tragedy is to produce Catharsis — 'Purgation' or 'purifications' of the emotions of pity and fear by their arousal. The theory of Catharsis, thus ascribes a motive or purpose or end to the tragic experience.

Aristotle's explanation and the rules of construction of the six parts of tragedy are directed to this ultimate aim of a tragedy. This end only — this excitement or arousal of the tragic emotions of pity and fear and thereby their Catharsis — determines the structure of the plot, action and thought and the structure is always subservient to function. Aristotle lays out his concept of a good — great tragedy which excites these emotions at their highest and thereby causes their Catharsis.

Aristotle, with his keen insight noticed that the artists had great power to arouse and communicate emotions that tragedy was an embodiment of emotions of pity and fear, and the "distinct function of this kind of imitation" was to arouse those emotions. Aristotle points out that "the tragic
pleasure is that of pity and fear and the poet has to produce it by a work of imitation. 47 The tragic pleasure grows out of the excitement of pity and fear and their Catharsis. So all the dramatic qualities of the plot, its arrangement - the unexpected but logical fearful and pathetic happenings - its length, continuity and unity - in short its beauty as a work of art, or the fact that it is an imitation of action are directed towards this ulterior aim of the Catharsis of the emotions of pity and fear. Even the qualities requisite to the tragic characters are deduced from the primary fact that the function of tragedy is to produce the Catharsis of pity and fear. The 'good noble' hero who is 'like us' with his 'undeserving misfortunes' and 'flaw (hamartia) in his character is meant to arouse the tragic emotions at their highest thereby causing their Catharsis.

Thus we see that Aristotle's theory of Catharsis ascribes a function, a motive or purpose to the tragic experience. It describes the tragic experience in terms of good, a value which is essentially moral. According to Aristotle, the tragic experience is good because it purges the painful element of the emotions of pity and fear and restores the mental health and thereby causes moral improvement.

47 Poes., 14, 1453 15
All the later exegetes of Aristotle agree that
they disagree about the meaning of the term 'Catharsis'
in sense of pathological or medical purgation, or 'purification' indicating a conversion of passion or emotion in
general into virtuous dispositions. Any interpretation of
the term, as Prof. Bywater points out "reads a directly
moral meaning into the term, as though the theatre were a
school and the tragic poet a teacher, of morality." This
moral and disciplinary purpose is the ultimate justification
of the existence of tragedy. This purpose proves the use-
fulness of Tragedy.

Here as Prof. Lucas says: "Aristotle is speaking as
moralist and legislator." Prof. Warry emphatically points
out "A term such as Catharsis with its purificatory or
clarificatory implications suggests some degree of moral or
rational amelioration such as might well mark the end as dis-
tinct from the process of art.... Aristotle seems to demand
that the hypnotic and fascinating power of poetry shall be
exercised in pursuit of a moral or rational end." To
credit poetry and drama with such motives is to make them
trespassers in the domain of religion and morality.

48 Ingram Bywater, Aristotle on the Art of Poetry
49 I. L. Lucas, p.47.
50 J. E. Warry, Greek Aesthetic Theory (London: Methuen 
& Co. Ltd., 1962), p.120.
From the above outline of the standard of aesthetics we see that the theory of Catharsis is not aesthetic but ethical in content. Estimation of beauty according to a practical interest is as we now wholly unaesthetic. We have noted before that art-experience has no practical, pragmatic, ulterior motive. It has no other purpose than the purpose of being itself. From the aesthetic theory, we have gathered that art-experience is in itself and for itself. It is an experience of savouring of emotions, portrayed in a work of art, accompanied by unalloyed pleasure. It is 'disinterested' or 'Will-less contemplation' of emotions presented in a work of art. Art cannot be an utilitarian, practical activity, which aims at securing a pleasure or removing a pain.

As Prof. Bouanquet says "It would be idle to deny that both Plato and Aristotle are encumbered with moralistic considerations throughout the whole of their inquiry into the nature of fine art." 51 This moral and practical judgment is derived from the general belief in Hellenic thought of the age that "an artistic representation cannot be treated as different in kind or in aim from a reality of ordinary life" and "the resemblance has the same effect as the normal reality." 52

51 Bouanquet, p.18.
52 1. Ibid., p.11.
2. Ibid., p.19.
If artistic representation is related to man only as common place reality, then morally the representation of art must be judged by the same moral criteria as real life. The criteria then actually applied is the wholly unesthetic criteria of reality and morality. The very Greek term 'Mimesis' for the artistic representation proves that it was considered only as an imitation of reality and so judged accordingly.

But we have seen that according to the aesthetic concept, the art object has its own reality. It is free from all categories of time and space and the law of empirical causality, and hence it has a reality with its own standards and values. The practical values cannot be ascribed to it. As the theory of Catharsis, ascribes such a practical moral value to the tragic experience, it is further away from the aesthetic value.

Aristotle seems to have failed to notice that the art-experience of emotions is altogether different from the experience of emotions in everyday ordinary world and so it

53 Compare Narada in Kavyaprakasa I, 1, 'Niyatikrats-niyamarahtah.' Free of the Laws of the Universe - or without the (necessary) Laws imposed by Fate.
does not affect in the same way, causing pain and pleasure. Aristotle took these both experiences to be of the same kind, and judged them by the same criteria of truth and goodness. He keeps on insisting that we have the emotions of pity and fear because the tragic characters are 'like us'. He cannot distinguish between art-characters and real human beings. He fails to recognise that the art-experience and the real experience affect the mind in quite different ways. He fails to notice, that the experience of feelings in art is simply a cognition - a contemplation. Here we do not respond or react with the same laws of stimuli and effect as we would in real life. We saw that the true aesthetic experience consists of 'Will-less contemplation' but Aristotle never reached to that conclusion.

Aristotle has said in his definition of tragedy that the 'Catharsis' is accompanied by pleasure which is produced from the relief. Aristotle acknowledges that the art-experience gives pleasure but fails to notice that it is 'pure unalloyed pleasure' or the direct delight which attends the perception of beauty-which is the essence of aesthetic value. He was unable to distinguish the pleasure of expressiveness from the pleasure of practical interest of morality. The pleasure which he describes is not expected to arise from the
sheer expressive effect of the art-experience but it arises from the pathological relief that 'purification' brings. Aristotle recognised the pleasure that we take in imitation and the pleasure in recognition and learning. He noticed that the things are transformed in art and the disagreeable and unpleasant becomes agreeable and pleasant. But he points out that the ultimate value of this pleasure is due to its 'calmative effect' from 'purification' or 'purification'. So when he identifies this pleasure with moral interest he is far away from the aesthetic value.

Thus we see, as Prof. Bosanquet says that the theory of catharsis is far from "the accepted modern doctrine that aesthetic interest in the beauty of a presentation is distinct from the real or selfish interest in its actual existence for the satisfaction of desire." Art being free, we can never make it subservient to a practical or sensuous end, so then it ceases to be the object of aesthetic judgment.

Some modern critics even think that it is not only that the theory of Catharsis is unesthetic but it is psychologically unsound too. It is not always true that the excitation of emotions, purges them and reduces the 'excess restoring the mental health on the contrary they get heightened

54 Bosanquet, p.18.
and intensified. As Lucas points out "The appetite for emotion may grow with the eating." Lucas puts it very nicely why we go to see a tragedy: "and so we too go to tragedies not in the least to get rid of emotions, but to have them more abundantly, to banquet, not to purge. Our lives are often dull; they are always brief in duration and confined in scope; but in drama or fiction, even the being "whose dull morrow cometh and is as today is can experience, vicariously, something more." 56

From all these considerations it would not be wrong to say that the theory of catharsis is not aesthetic in the modern sense of the term.

The Theory of Rasa and the Aesthetic Concept

Dharana has propounded his theory of Rasa with reference to the dramatic experience in his famous aphorism Rasasutra - given in the 6th Adhyaya of the Na. The process of the realisation of Rasa is given in this sutra - "Rasa is realised or born out of the union of the Vibhavas, the Anubhavas and the Vyabhicāribhavas." 57 As we have seen,

55 Lucas, p.52.
56 Ibid., p.73.
57 Na, G0S., I,6,p. 272.
the Vibhāva is the objective condition producing a Bhāva - a mental state. The purpose of the Vibhāva is to enable one to understand or cognize a Bhāva in its particularity. The Anubhāvas are the physical effects or manifestations of Bhāvas - mental states. The mental states are made to be felt by Anubhāvas. The Vyabhicāribhāvas are the concomitants or the Transitory feelings which are suggested or directly mentioned in a drama. The union of these three awaken the Permanent mental states and the relish of those Stūyibhāvas is Rasa.

The Vibhāvas and the Anubhāvas are described as the Kārane (causes) and Kāryas (effects) of mental states in order to connect them with the human experience. In the context of actual life, these words have causal, affective value, while in the context of dramatic experience Vibhāvas, etc., has only cognitive value. It is this cognitive value of the Vibhāvas, etc., which attains the state of Rasa. Here in the dramatic experience, the mental state is not generated by empirical sensation for practical purpose. The causal relation which holds valid in real life is significantly altered in the transposition to Art. At the same time, Bharata points out by using the words Kārana, etc. that the dramatic experience interacts with the r-remembered experiences of like character in the past to yield the final flavour of the experience. No one can deny the fact that art has its base in life, though the art-experience is of a different category,
It may be pointed out that the vibhūvas, etc., are the constituents of the dramatic action in relation to the various characters. We may say that this Rasa-sūtra is a sort of formula summarising the whole effect of a play, emotions - actions - characters. The whole dramatic process is put forth in this sūtra to explain the Rasa - experience.

Bharata explains the nature of this Rasa by an analogy taken from the culinary art. Just as taste or relish results from a combination of various condiments, vegetables and other substances; similarly taste or relish Rasa - results when the vibhūvas, anubhūvas and the vyabhicāri-bhavas combine to awaken the sthāyibhūvas. Rasa is tasting, savouring or relishing of these mental states - emotions and feelings delineated in drama.

This union of three different elements, elements possessing their own individual qualities or characteristics produce a new, unique element known as Rasa. Though different elements come together, the final flavour is unitary. We have noted before that the aesthetic value lies in this fusion. In the Rasa-experience, the quality of the whole (event or object), the total intuited quality of the whole dramatic experience, is emphasized. What is beautiful is the whole, not the heap of details. The qualities of the details are
fused into the quality of the whole. The fused quality, moreover is different from any of the details, even when the perceiver is taking up their qualities into the whole. That is why Bharata emphatically points out that the sthāyibhāvas by themselves are not Rasa. Neither are the Vibhāvas or the Amabhāvas which are jada-incensiant and so cannot be of the nature of Rasa. But they are transformed into Rasa when they are united with each other in the process of dramatic experience.

This new quality of the fusion of the different elements is called Rasa because the spectator tastes, savours or relishes the mental states presented in drama. This tasting, savouring or relishing is the soul or essence of drama and only purpose. This relish or savouring of emotions and feelings in art or aesthetic experience is the essence of the aesthetic concept, and so the realisation of Rasa is the aesthetic enjoyment itself. Bharata has touched the core of the aesthetic concept when he explains the dramatic experience in the terms of Rasa - the arousal and savouring or relishing of emotions delineated or portrayed in a work of art. Like Aristotle, Bharata has indicated the best plot, character and action which evoke or arouse the mental states at their highest. But the ultimate purpose of the drama is this tasting or relishing of the evoked mental states.
Next Bharata points out that this experience of Rasa is essentially blissful or joyful, irrespective of its subject matter. Here an important, vital aesthetic quality is brought in to distinguish art-experience from the ordinary, everyday experience. In the everyday experience, the Sthāyibhūvas - the permanent mental states - are worldly and confined to a particular space, time and individual and it may generate pain or pleasure, according to its causes. But in drama or poetry, they are awakened, aroused or brought into clear consciousness by the operation of the Vibhūvas, etc. and they shed their limitations and become generalised or universalised and are transformed into Rasas, and that is why they are always joyful. Later on Bharata's commentators describe Rasa, on account of its such a nature, in terms of ecstasy or supreme joy. It is akin to the total joy of Brahma - experience. In the Rasa-experience, for a moment, the hard shell of the 'I' or ego is cracked and allowed to flow out to the higher self, and it tastes the endless bliss of the supreme consciousness. The inexplicable thrill of delight - caustikara that arises from Rasasa-vedana is similar to the highest joy - ānanda that comes from realising one's identity with Brahman, and the purpose of Rasa is nothing else but this experience of ānanda - ecstasy or pure bliss or joy.

This basic concept of Rasa was developed later on,
by the exegets of Bharata in light of their own philosophical thinking. All the exegets agree that Rasa is a unique combination of different elements and is the tasting or savoring or relishing of the mental states - Bhāvas presented in drama; and it is always joyful because it is the contemplation or pure cognition of emotions and feelings as such. They disagree though about the psychological and epistemological problems arising out of the process of the realization of Rasa.

Bhāṭṭa Lollata maintains that Rasa is produced by the combination of Vibhāvas, Anuḥbhāvas and Vyabhirībhāvas and Rasa is nothing but the Sthāyibhāvas, nourished or intensified by the Vibhāva, etc. He also maintains that Rasa primarily resides in the represented personage - amukēya - and secondarily in the actor by his identification - anusan-dhāna - with the said character.

For Śrī Saṅkṣaṇa, Rasa is simply an imitation of the Sthāyibhāvas proper to the represented character and just because it is an imitation it is called by a different name - Rasa. By the power of inference, this imitation of the mental states is known as Rasa. This view, known as 'ānekṛti-anumānātivaṅi' takes us to the domain of knowledge or cognition.

According to the sāṁkhya School, Rasa is nothing but Sthāyibhāvas and as of the nature of pain and pleasure because
the external, objective phenomena have the potentiality of causing pain and pleasure.

For Bhavabhūta, Rasa is neither directly known or apprehended nor it is suggested or manifested, but he explains it in terms of Bhāvanā - the generalising power of an imaginative sympathetic person - Bhāvaka. According to him, on account of preponderance of Sattva, our consciousness becomes enlightened and blissful. Repose in such consciousness is Bhoga and Rasa is enjoyed by such Bhoga.

When we come to Sa, we find that this theory of Rasa as the tasting or relish of mental states culminates in the concept of Rasa as 'nirvighanaśātvitti' - a pure consciousness or cognition of Bhāvas - mental states without any barriers of time, space and particularity. It is this 'nirvighanaśātvitti', which is known as cānācāra - wonder of joy or thrill of delight, nirveda - immersion in joy, rasaśā - relish, āsvadana - tasting or savouring, bhoga - delectation or enjoyment, samāpatti - identification with the contemplated object, laya-lysia and vibhānti - repose. All these terms reveal the highest ecstasy as such. This perception or cognition or contemplation or consciousness of a particular Bhāva portrayed in drama by the Vibhāvas, etc., is free of the feelings of pain and pleasure and the consequent attempts of receiving and rejecting (nāmapādāna vṛtti). By the
power of generalisation the spectator cognises the mental states as such. This state of contemplation or consciousness of the nature of relish is free from all barriers by the operation of the Vibhāvas, etc. and therefore it is unusual or alaukika. AG makes it clear that the Rasa - experience, though a cognition is different from all other cognitions empirical or yogic recognised in the Indian Philosophy, and by its very nature is 'a thing of joy forever'.

Thus the Rasa-sūtra is the formula of the whole dramatic experience and if we may add in general of the experience of all fine arts as rasa describes the artistic enjoyment as such. The concept of Rasa has been applied to several fine arts such as poetry, music, dancing and painting. The vivid representation of the Vibhāvas, Anubhāvas, and Vyabhicāribhāvas in a drama or a poem call forth the dormant Sthāyibhāva and develop or nourish it to a climax; and by the operation of generalisation, by our complete imaginative sympathy, we relish this mental state (emotion, sentiment or feeling) in its generic aspect, free from all barriers like individualistic elements, and of time and place, and this tasting, relish, savouring is rasa. Thus we see that rasa is nothing but enjoyment in art.

If we take this significance of Rasa-sūtra we see
that it has a close affinity with the modern aesthetic concept. Our above outline of the aesthetic concept confirms that the concept of *Rasa* is essentially aesthetic. The final cause of *Rasa* is *Ananda* or pure joy or bliss and so we can say that the theory of *Rasa* is purely aesthetic. As the noted English Critic Allardyce Nicoll says:

"This concept is one that has wide application and perhaps in the West we have only lately been gropingly moving towards an appreciation of its significance. Modern aesthetic theory with its emphasis on 'disinterested aesthetic contemplation' comes very close to the Sanskrit attitude."[^3]

The study is concluded with the remark that both the theories, the theory of Catharsis, and the theory of *Rasa* give the justification of drama but in different lights. The Aristotelian theory has in view the moral or the hygienic-pathological improvement and the relief accompanied by pleasure, while the theory of *Rasa* has in view the total experience of aesthetic enjoyment, full of *Ananda* or bliss. In the one the beautiful is identified with the good and ultimately with the useful while in the other the beautiful is the tasting, relishing or 'will-less contemplation' of human emotions full of blissful joy. It has no other ulterior motive than the relish itself. One may add that it does not

mean that the Sanskrit drama is not concerned with the socially accepted morality. On the contrary, its absence is regarded as one of the vighnas, interruption or barrier to Rasa experience, but the theory regards Rasa - the aesthetic enjoyment or bliss as the only purpose of drama while Aristotle does acknowledge pleasure but the highest status of the 'final cause' of drama is bestowed on Catharsis - the purgation or purification of emotions. Thus the theory of rasa is nearer to the aesthetic concept than the theory of Catharsis.